



Justin P. Wilson, Comptroller

July 7, 2017

Comptroller's Office Investigates Possible Conflict of Interest at McMinnville Water and Wastewater Department

The Tennessee Comptroller's Office has completed an investigation detailing the appearance of a conflict of interest at the McMinnville Water and Wastewater Department after department officials alerted the Comptroller's Office to their concerns.

During the period June 2013 through September 2015, a former employee responsible for ordering specific chemicals made purchases totaling \$46,882 from a company owned by someone with whom he had a close personal relationship. The department used these chemicals to unclog and clear part of the city's sewer system.

This personal relationship created the appearance of a conflict of interest. It was not possible for department management to ensure that either the motivation for selecting the vendor as a supplier, or the volume of purchases from that supplier, was purely in the city's best interest. The volume and cost of chemicals purchased by the department increased significantly during the time the former employee was purchasing from the vendor with whom he had a personal relationship.



Government officials hold a position of public trust and must strive to hold themselves and their employees to standards beyond reproach. Officials should not engage in any action, whether or not specifically prohibited by statute, regulation or policy, which might result in or create the appearance of private gain, preferential treatment or impeding government efficiency.

"It's vital that government officials maintain their fiduciary responsibility to their citizens and customers," said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. "I am pleased to see McMinnville leaders are taking steps to develop a better system for scrutinizing and evaluating vendors."

To view the investigative report online, go to: <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/ia/>.

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